

F499
C6 C59

nd Americanization com
**AMERICANIZATION
OF CLEVELAND**

THE first half year's work of the Cleveland Americanization Committee, being done without precedents to follow, has of necessity been experimental. Having definitely in mind the interpretation of America to the foreign-born, and equally the interpretation of foreign culture and character to native-born Americans, the problem has been to decide upon the methods of work which would best produce immediate and tangible results.

We have attempted above all things to be practical, and have in every case secured the advice and experienced judgment of workers already in the field, among whom the staff of the Cleveland Public Library deserve special mention. The Library branches in the various foreign districts have more points of contact with their neighborhoods than any other existing agency, and the advice and assistance of the various branch librarians has been invaluable.

One of the most important steps in the Americanization of the foreign-born is, of course, the learning of the English language. The Board of Education has for years maintained evening schools for this purpose, with results excellent so far as attained, but touching only a fraction of the need. Dr. Frank E. Spaulding, Superintendent of Schools, at the commencement of his term of office in September, 1917, announced that it would be one of his policies to make the public schools just as effective an Americanization agency as possible. To this

end he appointed Dr. A. W. Castle as Supervisor of Educational Extension to have general charge of Americanization matters in the schools. The work developed so rapidly that Dr. E. P. Wiles was selected to be in immediate charge thereof. In cooperation with the School authorities in increasing the number of these classes, we have at all times found the school organization very efficient.

Better preparation of teachers was first secured by a Teachers Americanization Institute held at the Normal School in September, under the direction of Dr. Castle, and of Prof. R. Moley, of the Western Reserve University, both being members of the Committee, Prof. Moley specializing in the teaching of citizenship.

A new citizenship manual by Prof. Moley will appear within a few days, publication thereof being made by the Cleveland Trust Company. This manual will prove a valuable aid in Americanization.

We became convinced that classes must be made more accessible; that the foreign-born must not be asked to find a class by hunting for it; but on the contrary that he must see a class directly in his way, and must be made conscious that through it lay his path to Opportunity.

We have therefore made it our business to promote classes in English through many agencies; advertising broadly that whenever and wherever a group of 15 or more can conveniently meet, then and there a class will be organized and a teacher provided. The response to this invitation has been quite as good as could be expected in this short time, and while materially increasing the attendance in the public

evening schools, it has led to the formation of classes in libraries, social settlements, churches, parochial schools, foreign halls, hotels, and factories, with others about to form. Some of these classes, although financed by the Committee, are under Dr. Castle's direction and supervision, the teachers being appointed by him, so that their work conforms in all respects to the standards of the Board of Education. Most of them are finding, however, that it is best to make their work continuous, and to disregard the vacation intermissions of the public schools.

Concerning the classes in factories, various employers have expressed themselves as follows:—

Mr. Ernest Joseph, of the Joseph & Feiss Company, who has considered this problem during the last five years as a part of the scientific management of his shops says:

“A few years ago we had a number of foreign men and women who could speak no English. As a result there were constantly recurring misunderstandings between workers and their foremen. Whenever any change in policy was introduced it was impossible to get it across to our foreign people. Interpreters were used frequently with the usual results where a third person has to be called on.

“We realized the fact that our labor turnover was affected seriously by this inability to reach a number of our people directly and that workers frequently left with antagonism because of slight misunderstandings due to a lack of a common language. Accordingly we installed factory classes which were made compulsory and after a few months the rule was made that foremen must give people *a chance* to practice English by

patiently explaining matters in English instead of speaking foreign languages.

"We have been able to secure telling results in better cooperation of our workers, more intelligent handling of work and clearer understanding of factory problems such as steadiness of attendance. Altogether we can not speak too enthusiastically of the actual value in dollars and cents of English classes in factories."

Mr. C. J. Abell, General Supt. of the Cleveland Provision Company, has organized a class in his plant for the following reasons:

"Men having gained knowledge of the English, can more readily understand instructions, therefore facilitating the work and permitting the foremen to accomplish more work in a stated period.

"Our foreign employees having obtained a thorough knowledge of the English Language, must necessarily thereby become imbued with the spirit of Americanism and will necessarily therefore be more loyal to our concern."

A few factory executives contend that because of the tense labor situation in Cleveland, they are unwilling to ask their men to join a class. This argument is answered by Mr. E. G. Green, of the Ferry Cap & Screw Company, who says:

"In regard to our factory class of teaching foreigners English, would say that we picked out those with whom we had the most trouble and where we had a 50% labor turnover, and since starting the class of about 25 or 30 about three months ago, not one has quit."

Mr. R. H. Seligman of the Federal Knitting Mills Company writes the following:

"I can only say that up to this time, which means after a period of about six

weeks, we are pleased at the progress made. We succeeded in creating two classes, mostly of people who did not know any English at all, and were not conscious previous to that time of the value of the knowledge of our language. It is mainly due to the efforts of the teacher that it was possible to hold the interest of all the people connected with the night school. We can state, today, that every one of these people, without exception, can spell and read English, and also that everyone is very anxious to increase their knowledge, and is a booster for the cause.

“This statement can be proven by the following incident: Although our factory was closed on Monday last on account of the fuel order, a number of people found their way to the factory at 5:30 that afternoon, in order to attend their nightly studies; but no school was held on that day. Of course, this is too short a time to judge the actual result of education on the daily work of these people, or the benefit our institution would derive from same. Nevertheless whichever the case might be, we are gratified in the realization that we are helping a number of people along in making their struggle for existence easier, by enabling them to speak our language, and to become real American citizens.”

The Globe Machine & Stamping Company have already derived definite results from their classes, which Mr. C. L. Walters gives as follows:

“The direct benefits of the educational work are already observable in the ability of our employees to understand more quickly and more intelligently the instructions given to them by our foremen. Their handwriting on time cards is more legible, too. Because of these classes and the results which have been

achieved, our foreign born employees have increased their industrial efficiency and consequently their earning power. The economic benefit is, therefore, two-fold. Both employer and employee profit from the institution of such classes in industrial plants.

“A more important consideration, however, is the appreciation that the men derive of American ideals, liberty and democracy. Becoming familiar, as they are, with the language of our country the possibilities of a divided allegiance are lessened and a true appreciation of America is established.”

Mr. Hugh Fullerton of the H. Black Company writes as follows:

“I am glad to say that we are immensely pleased with the result of our experiment of teaching English to the foreigners in our factory. We have not secured as large a number as we should have liked to secure. We feel that there are a number of men and women in our factory who ought to have the advantage of this education, but the enthusiastic response of those who have attended and their interest has fully repaid us for the effort we make and their time which we lose.

“In several cases we can see a distinct growth in the men and women who have attended. They are better employees and are going to be better citizens of Cleveland.”

Since the receipt of this letter several of the H. Black Co., employees have inquired how to become citizens, and in consequence a citizenship class has been formed for them right in the factory.

The accessibility, lack of formality, and convenience of these factory classes has made it possible for many operatives to take up the study of English who would not otherwise have found time to

do so, and this accounts in part at least for the fact that although Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and other cities have less attendance this year than last, Cleveland has an increase of over 800, with an average daily attendance of fifty per cent, against thirty-three per cent in 1915.

Other activities undertaken by the Committee are the Americanization Information Bureau at the Old Court House, which has interpreted the draft and other war measures to non-English speaking residents of the city, assisting over 11,000 to fill out their questionnaires; three bureaus of information for foreign-speaking women, at St. Clair, Longwood, and Tremont Schools. The object of these Bureaus is to furnish a place for the foreign mother to go for information as to the facilities available to her in the city, and to mediate between the mother and the school where there has been lack of understanding.

Citizenship classes for men have been maintained as advanced English classes, as heretofore, but a new development has been in the formation, through the Foreign auxiliaries of the Woman's Suffrage Party, of citizenship classes for women. There can be no doubt that the homes from which these women come will form an American center, which must ultimately grow to include their whole neighborhoods.

The Committee will be glad to assist any person or organization to carry out plans for the assimilation of all our people into a unified country.

Appreciative notices are appearing in various publications throughout the

country, of the
Americanization
which has been r
the hearty supp
Advisory War Committee.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 573 629 8 ●

March 15, 1918.

CLEVELAND
AMERICANIZATION COMMITTEE
OF THE
MAYOR'S ADVISORY WAR BOARD
ROOM 226, CITY HALL
MAIN 6950 **CENTRAL 1**

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 573 629 8 ●